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ENVISION OAKLAND

A Discussion Guide to
Potential Change Areas and Policies

Oakland General Plan Update Spring 1996



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Envision Oakland in the 21st century, as you fly above it ...

From your window, you see signs of progressive change. You see the length of waterfront as Oakland's "front door" with shops and recreational areas alongside the City's busy ports. You trace the short path from the waterfront to downtown, where the ever-changing skyline signifies Oakland's growth as the East Bay's governmental and corporate hub. You notice older industrial lands, reactivated with new, vital industries and commercial activities. Looking beyond the urban core, you observe the patchwork of diverse neighborhoods, protected from the busier aspects of city life. In the distance, the East Bay Hills framing the City are sprinkled with lower-density development. Finally, you see the intricate web of roads and tracks that link Oakland with the far reaches of the region, nation and world. You conclude that Oakland is a city in progress and a city of progress, a regional city and an international city, meeting the challenges of the future.

Why Update the General Plan?

Oakland is updating the General Plan to prepare for the future. New challenges arise as the City's population and economy change over time. During the 1980s, the number of Oakland residents jumped 10 percent, following four decades of population decline. The City's population is expected to continue to rise—and to become increasingly diverse. Meanwhile, Oakland's economy has been impacted by a number of trends, including the shift from manufacturing to service-oriented industries, increased competition from the suburbs, and reduced federal support. Although these trends have led to job losses and higher unemployment, the City is expected to gain 23,000 jobs over the next two decades. (See graphs to right.)

This vision is no far-flung fantasy. It is being actively pursued by hundreds of Oakland's residents and business and community leaders.

The City is currently updating its General Plan, the guide for Oakland's physical growth and development. The General Plan, which focuses on the next 20 years, provides goals and policies to assist civic leaders in future planning decisions—and ultimately in the efforts towards achieving this vision. This gazette summarizes the proposed policy framework for Oakland's future development.

The General Plan update is being guided by Oakland's General Plan Congress, a 33-member group of volunteers appointed by the Mayor and City Council to represent the people of Oakland. The work of the Congress has resulted in the production of a draft Goals, Objectives and Policies report. This gazette summarizes the main ideas and policy directions contained within that document.

In addition to monthly meetings, the Congress has hosted a series of community workshops to hear community concerns and to elicit potential solutions. In fact, many of the policies described in this gazette originated from

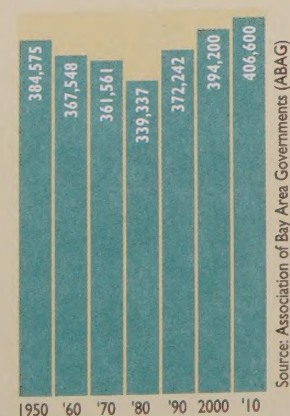
residents and business owners participating in these events. See the back page for information about getting involved in the Oakland General Plan update.

"Public participation makes our plan for the future meaningful. The purpose of the General Plan Congress is to develop a plan for Oakland that is built on a foundation of community values and ideas. I invite you to join us in the months ahead as we craft a blueprint for our city."
—Peter Smith, General Plan Congress Chair

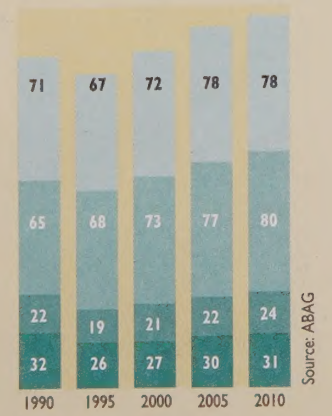


Population By Ethnicity
in thousands

- Hispanic
- Asian
- African American
- White



Population Projections



City of Oakland Employment Projections
in thousands

- Residential
- Service
- Retail
- Manufacturing/Wholesale

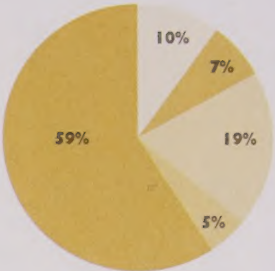


The Challenge for Oakland

If the City is to secure its position as a regional and international leader, meet the demands of an increasingly diverse population, and provide jobs, services, and a vibrant, secure community life, it must take decisive action to shape its future. The General Plan can help the people of Oakland make the decisions necessary to shape the City's growth and development.

To shape the course of development, Oakland must focus and build on its assets or strengths. Although much of Oakland is already developed, tremendous opportunities for change exist in key areas of the City. Bold actions in these areas can lead Oakland to a proud, prosperous future. The General Plan Congress has identified five such areas of change and has developed a series of potential policies and programs to guide Oakland to its desired future.

Today Oakland is a built-out city with little vacant land. Future development will be largely in the form of reconstruction or reuse of existing properties. The allocation and location of land use activities to accommodate future needs present a key challenge.



Developed Land Distribution

- Residential
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Infrastructure
- Commercial

Source: ABAG

General Plan support downtown Oakland as a regional economic and commercial hub, and promote it as a community of unique districts, offering around-the-clock activities and an exciting urban living experience.

Industry and Commerce

Envision a dynamic economy that realizes Oakland's vast economic potential and capi-

accommodating development to meet the needs of a growing population. The policy framework accomplishes this by targeting development along major transit corridors, and by concentrating growth around mixed-use urban



Waterfront

The shores of Oakland's waterfront offer enormous potential for the future. Under the draft goals and policies, the busy seaport and airport would continue their expansion as a leading terminus connecting the nation to the global economy. The estuary shoreline, meanwhile, would become the City's front door, making Oakland among the most exciting and dynamic waterfront cities in the country.

Downtown

At the crossroads of a regional transit and telecommunications network, with a vibrant street life and a high density of architecturally interesting office buildings, downtown Oakland has become a regional center. Policies drafted for the

talizes on its physical, educational, human, and cultural assets. Draft policies for the Plan include strategies for supporting the regional importance of the seaport, airport, and downtown office district. Underutilized properties and military base conversions are identified as opportunities for expanding revenue and employment.

Neighborhoods

Oakland's cherished neighborhoods provide an intimate scale and sense of community. Rich in character, diversity, and commercial vitality, these neighborhoods, each with its own distinctive identity, must be protected from the harmful effects of untempered growth—while still

villages where residents can take advantage of nearby stores, restaurants, and community centers.

Transportation

Transportation, the catalyst for Oakland's expansion since the City became the western terminus for the transcontinental railroad in 1865, continues to fuel and define Oakland's growth. Intercontinental railway connections, a burgeoning airport and seaport, the convergence of freeways, BART, and local transit create a network that will continue to stimulate and support Oakland's development.

Envision yourself strolling down the new Oakland waterfront, as sailboats drift down the estuary

Oakland enjoys 19 miles of shoreline, more than any other city in the Bay Area ...

to the Bay. After browsing through some shops, you stop by the farmer's market to inspect the

Today, the Port of Oakland is one of the largest container terminals on the

colorful displays of produce. You then walk over to the dock, where you greet your friends from

West Coast, carrying 30 percent of all international cargo. Since the early 1990's,

San Francisco arriving by ferry. The three of you head to an outdoor bistro, where you enjoy

Oakland International Airport has been the fastest-growing airport in the U.S.

a seafood lunch out in the sun. From your table, you can see cranes unloading cargo from ships

The number of passengers jumped from two million in 1988 to over 10 million

from the world over. Over dessert, you discuss whether to spend the afternoon at an outdoor

today ... Air cargo volume has increased more than 3000 percent.

concert or at the Arrowhead Marsh preserve ...



WATER FRONT

Oakland's waterfront offers a remarkable wealth of resources. As home to a busy seaport and airport, a portion of the shoreline is a key source of revenue and jobs for the City. Still, great potential exists for it to provide even more. As Oakland takes advantage of this beautiful backdrop, it will strengthen its identity as a waterfront city—benefiting visitors and community members alike. Oakland's waterfront has the potential to be the catalyst for the City's revitalization.

"The waterfront presents a tremendous opportunity to strike a balance between the planning and development of public access areas and economic development, and for enhancing the world class status of our seaport and airport." — Celso D. Ortiz, Waterfront Working Group Chair, General Plan Congress.

A Waterfront for All to Use

Much of the current waterfront activity is industry-related, centered around the City's seaport and airport operations. These uses alone, however, do not fully maximize the shoreline's potential. New and revitalized shops, restaurants, entertainment, water-related development, recreation, open space, housing, and cultural amenities are among the exciting array of activities that could be developed. By diversifying the uses of the waterfront, the City will open up the area to a wider spectrum of people. *The policy framework calls for development with mixed and multiple uses along portions of the waterfront, such as retail shops, housing, water transit, entertainment activities, water recreation, cultural activities, festivals and other programs, and open space, plazas, and parks.*

Access to the Waterfront

Broadening use of the waterfront, however, will require improving public access and its connections with the rest of the City, particularly with the downtown area and adjacent neighborhoods.

Currently, the public can only directly access a small percentage of the waterfront: between Jack London Square and the airport, along the estuary, and around San Leandro Bay. Even these areas can be difficult to reach, with railroad tracks, freeways, and other structures lying in the path. Removing physical barriers will help reduce the sense of isolation along the waterfront and improve public access to and along this area. *Policies propose better connections between development and activities along the waterfront with a continuous pedestrian and bicycle route to create safe and interesting public access. This can be achieved by drafting a public access plan, developing public access in advance of development projects, and encouraging the use of public transit.*

With the development of public uses, however, careful attention must be given to existing seaport, airport, and related operations, which may conflict with these new uses. *The framework prescribes creating safe gateways at key locations to provide links between our neighborhoods and waterfront, and placing buffers around the seaport, airport, and related operations to minimize conflicts.*

A Stronger Seaport and Airport

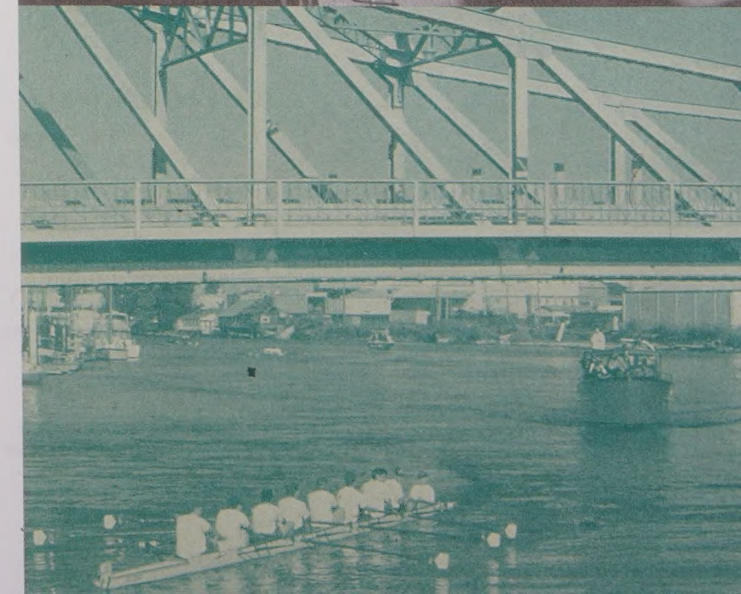
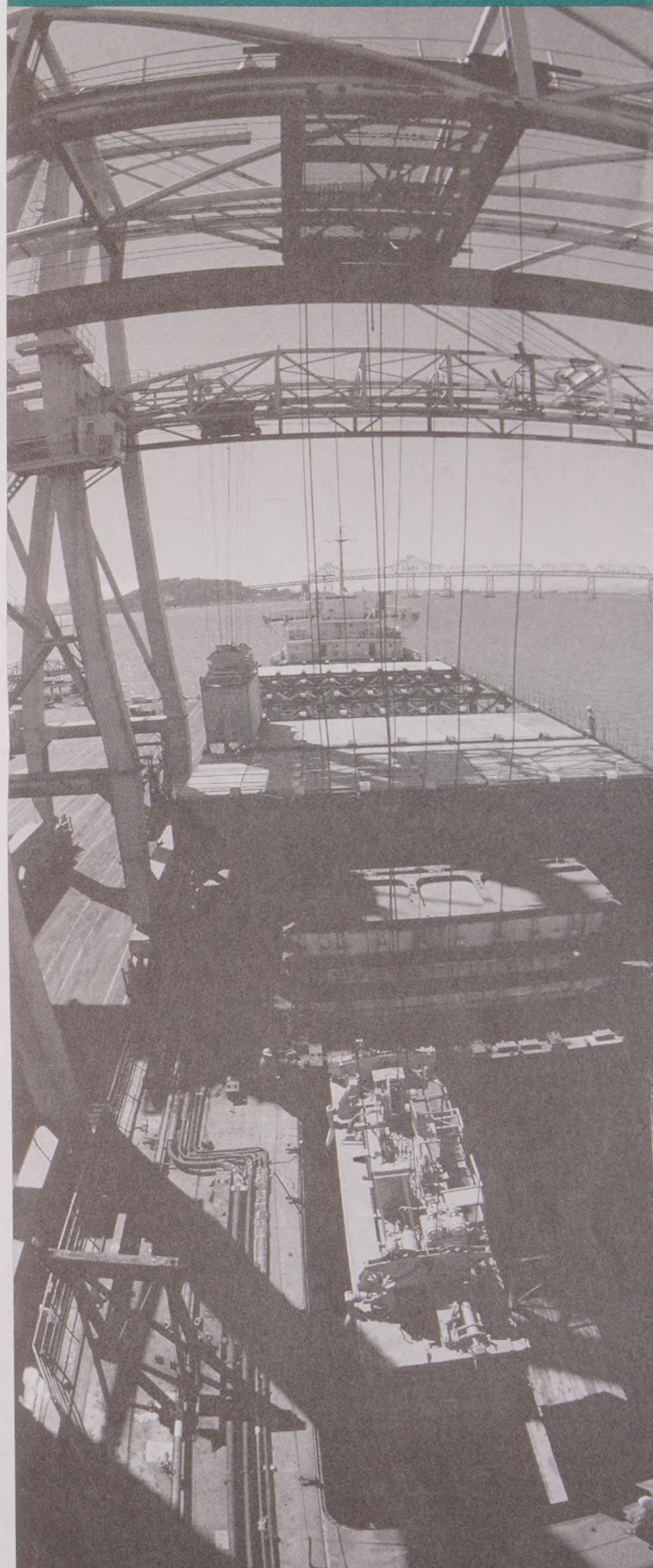
Oakland's position as a leading West Coast seaport and a key airport can be used to enhance and promote the City's economy. These facilities can become the major international gateways in northern California and serve as hubs of national, regional, and local transportation networks. *Policies are put forth to support the expansion of the seaport and airport and to improve their position in intermodal transportation networks. Additionally, Oakland can capitalize on increased seaport and airport activity by attracting related commercial and industrial uses, leading to even greater economic benefits and jobs for the City.*

Waterfront Environments

The waterfront is home to a diverse group of plant and animal species. Shoreline habitats include the wetlands of the Emeryville Crescent and Arrowhead Marsh, as well as public open space along the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline. *The policy framework calls for preservation and enhancement of these areas by controlling access to protect sensitive environments and to maintain the high quality and character of these aquatic settings.*

Developing a Waterfront Plan

The City's next step is to draft more detailed plans for developing the waterfront. The planning process should consider economic and market realities and identify strategies for implementation. *Proposed policies provide for more detailed, comprehensive planning to determine what kinds of development are appropriate, at what densities, and at what locations.*



Envision yourself taking an early evening walk from Jack London Square up Broadway through

In 1981, the City contained approximately 7.3 million square feet of

Oakland's revitalized downtown. On the right is Chinatown, where food markets remain busy as

office space. By 1993, this number had soared to about 13 million,

restaurants open for dinner. On the left are the Victorian buildings of Old Oakland, where shoppers

representing a 77 percent increase ... In 1993, approximately 80,000

meander through galleries and boutiques. Passing City Center, you see a stream of workers, some

people worked in downtown Oakland. About 84 percent of downtown

heading towards the BART station and bus stops, some walking home. Around 20th Street, joggers

office space was occupied, a number projected to increase in the

head east to Lake Merritt for a pre-sunset lap. A line of theatergoers begins to form outside the

near future ... In 1990, more than 11,000 people were living in

Paramount. Across the street, a woman, groceries in hand, walks back to her downtown apartment.

downtown Oakland, occupying a total of 6,780 housing units ...

Buses are everywhere, shuttling people to and from this dynamic mix of activity ...



OFFICE SPACE

Downtown Oakland will maintain its role as a regional office center with major governmental and corporate offices concentrated near the 12th Street and 19th Street BART stations. Smaller office development will be promoted throughout the rest of downtown. New buildings near Lake Merritt will be tapered back to preserve views. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objectives D7 and D8, and related policies.)

A COMMUNITY OF DISTRICTS
Downtown Oakland is comprised of a set of districts. Each district will be further defined by its own unique character and focal point. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective D1 and related policies.)



COMMERCIAL USES

Each downtown district will have its own commercial center to meet the needs of workers and local residents. Retail stores serving the entire region will be found primarily in Chinatown, along the Jack London Waterfront, and on Broadway between 12th and 21st Streets. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy D9.1 and D9.2.)



HOUSING

Downtown housing will help create an around-the-clock community presence, bringing greater safety and vitality to the area. The new housing will accommodate a wide variety of incomes, ownership options, and household types and sizes. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective D10 and related policies.)



BROADWAY

Broadway will undergo a series of improvements to transform it into a more pedestrian-oriented corridor. Such improvements will help to link downtown districts to each other and to the nearby waterfront. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy D1.1, Policy D1.2, D2.1, and Objective D3.)

DOWN TOWN

Up until World War II, downtown Oakland was the focus of social and commercial life in the City. Functioning as the economic core of the East Bay, the downtown gave Oakland much of its identity. Although in recent years activity has shifted away from this area, opportunities abound for making downtown once again the heart of Oakland and the surrounding region.

"A major goal of the General Plan Congress is to promote downtown Oakland's position as a dynamic economic center. Downtown is a community of districts that will be enhanced and revitalized, helping to make downtown everybody's neighborhood." — Judy L. Rowe, Downtown Working Group Chair, General Plan Congress.

A Downtown of Districts

Downtown Oakland covers a relatively large area, with boundaries along Grand Avenue, Interstate 980, the estuary, and Lake Merritt/Channel Park. *The policy framework calls for treating downtown as a community of distinct districts for focusing development. While these districts will have their own identities and unique qualities, they will all contribute to the overall fabric of downtown Oakland. Possible downtown districts include City Center, Chinatown, Old Oakland, the Broadway corridor, the Gateway area, Kaiser Center, and the Gold Coast.*

Housing for a 24-Hour Downtown

Adding housing to downtown Oakland will help boost the vitality of the area around the clock. As more residents move in, downtown activity will naturally increase. Housing will also help foster a sense of community, which is particularly important as the downtown is transformed into a series of neighborhoods. The downtown area has a large capacity for increasing density, unlike most residential areas in the City. *Housing that accommodates a wide range of incomes, needs, and household types will be created.*

Office Space

In the 1980s, downtown Oakland experienced a boom in office development, especially around City Center and Kaiser Center. Recent shifts towards telecommuting and suburban business parks, however, have affected the demand for downtown office space and reduced speculative development. In response, downtown Oakland is distinguishing itself as an administrative center. *Oakland will build upon this strategy, as proposed by the policy framework, and will target Broadway at 12th and 19th Streets, and the Kaiser Center area for large-scale private office development. These efforts will help promote downtown as the region's primary office center, countering the ill effects of sprawl.*

Shopping, Dining, and Entertainment

Retail corridors along Broadway and other downtown streets have declined in recent decades, due in part to competition from shopping malls and outlet stores. However, several mixed-use developments, most notably City Center, have breathed new life into the downtown area. *Policies propose that Oakland campaign to bring major retail, dining, and entertainment establishments to the downtown area. Such efforts will be boosted by the exceptional transit access to downtown, the abundance of downtown workers, the relatively high disposable income of Oakland citizens, and the potential for additional downtown residents.*

Access and Mobility

Moving people and goods through and within downtown in a safe, efficient manner is a key goal. A variety of transit lines already converge in downtown Oakland, serving both local and regional needs.

Opportunities have been identified to improve service within downtown and to enable bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers to easily access Lake Merritt, the various downtown districts, and the waterfront. The policy framework calls for minimizing physical barriers around new developments, and installing amenities such as street furniture, pavers, trees, and landscaping to create a more pedestrian-friendly setting.

Attractive, Harmonious Urban Form

To encourage people to visit, downtown Oakland should be inviting, comfortable, and secure. The area's many historic buildings, interspersed with newer development, help foster a sense of place that cannot be achieved in the suburbs. *New development should be interesting and contribute positively to the skyline. To achieve higher densities without sacrificing human scale, buildings should be taller in the middle and step down towards the sides. Future development should preserve views of Lake Merritt, the estuary, and architecturally or historically significant buildings. It is suggested that new development along the edge of Lake Merritt be limited to six stories.*

A Revitalized Downtown

Strengthening the downtown's economic base is a key component of any revitalization effort. *The policy framework emphasizes retaining and supporting expansion of existing businesses while also attracting new ones. The City should seek new ways of using vacant buildings. Eliminating blight, through rehabilitation where possible, is also important.*



Laying the Foundation for

The potential change areas and policies summarized in this Gazette, and detailed in the Goals,

Objectives and Policies document, will set the discussion agenda for the next phase of the General Plan

Update. Alternative development scenarios will be evaluated and tested through an intensive community

participation process. Specific implementation programs will also be identified.



Oakland's Future Development



WATERFRONT

A Vibrant Waterfront

Oakland will create a vibrant waterfront, featuring a lively blend of appealing activities with an emphasis on public access to the water's edge and adjoining neighborhoods. Detailed planning along the estuary will provide needed direction. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy W1.3 and Objectives W10, W11, and W12.)



NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood Identity

The identity of Oakland's neighborhoods will be strengthened to enhance a sense of community. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective N10 and related policies.)

Conservation of Neighborhoods

Established residential areas will be preserved. Infill development will be sensitive to existing scale and character of neighborhoods. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objectives N3 and N7 and related policies.)

Commercial Centers

Residential areas will be supported by local commercial centers which will contain a mix of retail, residential, cultural, educational, and entertainment activities. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective N1 and related policies.)

Target Areas for

Higher-Density Housing

Growth will be accommodated by housing rehabilitation and new construction.

New moderate and higher density housing will be directed to transit corridors, near transit stations, downtown, and the waterfront. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective N8.)

Compatibility of Development

Residential areas with long-term viability will be protected from incompatible new development. Where incompatibilities currently exist, efforts will be made to buffer neighborhoods from conflicting activities. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy N1.7, and Objective N5 and related policies.)



DOWNTOWN

A Community of Districts

Distinct districts have evolved in downtown Oakland, each with their own unique character. These will be further defined and emphasized. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective D1 and related policies.)

A Regional Office Hub

Downtown Oakland's role as a regional office center will be strengthened, with administrative and corporate offices concentrated near the 12th Street and 19th Street BART Stations. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objectives D7 and D8, and related policies.)

A Center for Culture and Entertainment

Downtown will be a regional magnet for culture, art, entertainment, and retail experiences. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective D12 and related policies.)



TRANSPORTATION

Transit-Oriented Development

The City's development pattern will be integrated with Oakland's transportation systems by cultivating compact, mixed-use districts near transit stations. Key transit corridors, such as San Pablo Avenue, Telegraph Avenue, Broadway, and East 14th Street, will be emphasized for more efficient travel to employment and commercial centers. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective T2 and related policies.)

Transportation of Goods

Oakland's unique ability to transport goods locally, regionally, and internationally, is a primary asset. Enhancements to the airport, seaport, rail systems, and trucking facilities will strengthen the City's position as a commercial transportation hub. A fiber-optics network will suggest technologically advanced industries and businesses. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy T1.1 and T1.3.)



INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

Regional Commercial Expansion Areas

The City's regional commercial markets will expand in targeted areas to provide greater shopping opportunities, jobs, and increased revenue. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective I/C 3.)

Study Areas for Industry and Employment

The I-880 corridor and Oakland Army Base offer unique opportunities for industrial expansion. Viable residential areas will be identified and protected from incompatible development. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy I/C 1.3.)

Seaport and Airport Economic Assets

The seaport and airport will continue to play an important economic role for the City and region by attracting maritime and aviation industries, as well as other related activities. (See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy I/C 1.10.)

Envision yourself living in a city with a thriving economy and a broad mix of businesses to meet your

During the 1980s, marine cargo transported through the Port of Oakland increased

daily needs. The city's modern infrastructure and favorable business climate have attracted a number

by more than 50 percent, while both passenger and cargo loads through Oakland

of new companies, bringing revenue and jobs. The industrial areas, built around outstanding port

International Airport increased dramatically ... In 1990, Oakland's largest employment

facilities, continue to thrive—with renewed prosperity. Each neighborhood has convenient

sector was the service industry, followed by retail trade and manufacturing. The

commercial districts, so residents don't have to travel far to run errands. Larger retail clusters along

service sector is an area of expanding strength in Oakland, with particularly rapid

the freeway offer a wide selection of durable goods, attracting regional consumers to Oakland. And

growth occurring in the business services and health services industries ...

with this added business revenue, the city has been able to expand its services and programs ...



"It is important that our economic vision take aim toward sustaining the vibrancy of the economy while emphasizing the diversity of Oakland and preserving the unique character of its neighborhoods."

— Del Davis, Industry and Commerce Working Group Chair, General Plan Congress.

Oakland's economic strengths are clear. It is a key transportation hub within the region, located at the crossroads of many freeway and rail systems, and home to a major airport and seaport. Numerous agencies and companies operate out of Oakland, making it the primary office center in the East Bay. And Oakland's position along the Pacific Rim helps it maintain its image as an international city with a rich cultural fabric. The City should celebrate and market these strengths, while continuing to build upon them as it enters the next century. Indeed, Oakland must address the dramatic changes that have transformed the economy in recent decades. The days of smoke-belching factories are long gone, with manufacturing giving way to more service-based industries.

Boosting the Economic Engines

The City can improve its economic outlook by simply making Oakland a better place to do business. Such measures will assist the City in retaining existing businesses and attracting new ones that will bring additional jobs and revenue. *The draft policy framework supports business retention and attraction efforts by calling for an Economic Development Strategy Plan to detail the City's economic strengths, to find opportunities for future growth, to identify new industries to attract, and to locate sites that are well suited for particular industries. Policies propose that the City evaluate and streamline its administrative procedures and seek ways to minimize the financial burden on businesses.*

Economic development can be spurred in a variety of other ways as well. *The policy framework calls for Oakland to develop a public investment strategy to support expansion of the economy. The City could also direct funds towards catalyst projects to stimulate investment from the private sector. Meanwhile, improvements to the infrastructure, such as fiber optics, would provide further incentive to do business in Oakland.*

Seaport and Airport

Oakland's seaport and airport are the cornerstones of the local economy, as well as important components of the regional economy. They attract a significant number of transportation- and distribution-based industries to the City. Thus it is vital that Oakland take advantage of the many opportunities that these facilities present.

Attracting new industries and maintaining Oakland's role as a primary West Coast port will require that adequate land is available for airport and seaport expansion. These efforts will also require support for an intermodal transport and cargo distribution facility and for terminal modernization and expansion. *Draft policies propose that the City and Port of Oakland develop a plan of action for supporting airport and seaport activities that expand the local and regional revenue and employment base.*

Regional Hub

Downtown Oakland's central Bay Area location and outstanding access to transit make it an attractive location for governmental and corporate headquarters. Building on these assets is essential for shaping the downtown of tomorrow. *Policies encourage promoting downtown Oakland as a regional hub for governmental, corporate, and institutional uses.*

Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Oakland's pedestrian-oriented shopping areas, with their urban charm, present an attractive alternative to the suburban mall and help keep money within the neighborhood economy. However, in many parts of the City, residents do not have access to even the most basic goods and services. As a result, they are forced to travel long distances—to meet their everyday needs. *Under the proposed policy, Oakland will strive to strengthen and preserve the vitality of existing neighborhood commercial centers, and encourage the development of new commercial districts at key locations. These efforts may come in the form of technical or financial assistance for small neighborhood businesses.*

Opportunities For Commerce

Oakland's existing commercial base requires expansion and diversification. One of the focus points for the City is to become competitive at retail merchandising within the region. Doing so will help boost Oakland's economy, as well as benefit local and regional customers alike. *Policies propose that Oakland attract larger-scale commercial development offering high-volume goods along Interstate 880 or in other areas that are visible or amenable to high volumes of traffic.*

INDUSTRY COMMERCE



Envision yourself living in a neighborhood that is different from any other place. Its unique mix of

Between 1980 and 1990, Oakland's population rose for the first time since World War II.

homes and people help identify this community. In the heart of the neighborhood is a commercial

Nearly half of this growth occurred in the Fruitvale and San Antonio neighborhoods

center, which serves as the focus of activity. This cluster of shops, small businesses, and apartments

Rapid growth in the Hispanic and Asian populations have made the City more diverse than

helps create a sense of community and belonging. Most of the neighborhood, however, has been

ever before ... During the 1980s, Oakland's population grew three times faster than the

preserved and protected from new development. Instead, higher-density housing to meet the needs

rate of housing construction. As a result, the demand for housing grew, as did median

of a growing population has arisen elsewhere: in the downtown area, near the waterfront, and

home prices. A family earning the median household income today cannot afford a

along streets where public transit is readily available. Oakland's neighborhoods are attractive,

median-priced home in Oakland; renters face similarly high costs

clean, and safe ...



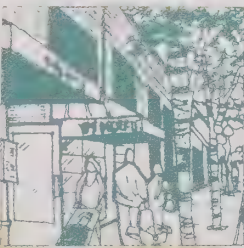
■ NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

A strong sense of community will be fostered within the City of Oakland. Future development will be carefully designed and located to fit the existing or desired character of the neighborhoods. Efforts by community organizations to improve their neighborhoods will be supported. Local commercial areas will serve as centers of activity, communication, and social interaction. Neighborhood patterns will be identified and used when defining public service areas, such as police beats and school attendance zones. The City will strive to maintain a positive public image, and will support events such as fairs or parades that contribute to the vibrancy of neighborhoods.
(See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective N10 and related policies.)



■ CONSERVATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Occupying broad areas of the City, Oakland's established residential neighborhoods provide housing, character, diversity, and a sense of community. These areas will be preserved and enhanced, and will be protected from incompatible development, through the reuse of existing character-defining structures and through well-designed infill development. Commercial activities will be sensitive to adjoining residential areas, and new higher-density housing will be located where it will be compatible with the surroundings.
(See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objectives N3 and N7 and related policies.)



■ COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Neighborhoods will be supported by commercial centers containing clusters of retail, residential, cultural, educational, and entertainment uses. These centers will be served by transit lines to encourage riders to browse and shop. The commercial centers may range in size and scale from small, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood nodes to larger centers that are both pedestrian-oriented and accessible by car. The distinct character of these areas will be fostered through careful design of new development. Large-scale commercial businesses offering goods and services to the broader region will be located outside of residential areas and targeted in downtown or near freeways.
(See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective N1 and related policies.)



■ TARGET AREAS FOR HIGHER-DENSITY HOUSING

New moderate- and higher-density housing, including garden apartments, mid-rise structures, and multi-story buildings, will be directed to parts of the City that are accessible by transit. These areas include transit or commercial corridors, and areas near transit stations, downtown, and the waterfront.
(See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Objective N8.)



■ COMPATIBILITY OF DEVELOPMENT

Certain types and styles of development can detract from neighborhood life. Future industrial and commercial development and higher-density housing will be located away from established neighborhoods. In areas where incompatibilities exist, the focus will be on creating buffer zones to protect residents. For example, the height of moderate- and high-density housing will step down as it nears lower-density areas. Commercial development will be designed to be compatible with surrounding residential areas.
(See Goals, Objectives, and Policies Report, Policy N1.7, and Objective N5 and related policies.)

NEIGHBORHOODS

One of Oakland's greatest strengths is its diversity in neighborhoods—from its historic neighborhoods to its modern hillside communities to its high-density apartment districts. It is estimated that in the year 2010, there will be over 400,000 Oakland residents. How housing and services are provided for the next generation will have a profound influence on the health and vitality of our neighborhoods and Oakland as a whole. The General Plan will provide guidance for new residential development and for conservation of our distinctive neighborhoods.

"The basic goal in planning for neighborhoods is being able to preserve and enhance established low-density areas and to stimulate higher-density growth where desirable. This balance is crucial to accommodate population growth through positive development."
— Art Clark, Neighborhoods Working Group Chair, General Plan Congress.

Neighborhood Preservation and Targeted Growth Areas

Lower-density neighborhoods are the backbone of Oakland, and occupy the greatest amount of land. However, how does the City balance neighborhood preservation with the need for more housing? Neighborhood workshops and General Plan Congress working sessions have produced a series of innovative and sound solutions.

The policy framework calls for protecting and enhancing existing low-density residential development. The Plan will maintain the broad areas of the City with existing single-family development as low-density areas. Other low-density areas will include one to four units per lot. New residential development areas will be compatible with the desired density, scale, design, and character. Local streets will be designed to create an intimate neighborhood environment. Growth will be targeted to areas around transit or commercial corridors, transit stations, downtown, and the waterfront.

A number of strategies are recommended for constructing, conserving, and enhancing housing resources. It is proposed that the City provide incentives for developing housing in medium- and higher-density areas. Incentives could include assistance for developers in locating sites for new housing and in identifying potential neighborhood concerns. It is also proposed that higher-density structures "step down" as they near existing lower-density development.

Another draft policy encourages developers to build relationships with the community from a project's inception through construction.

Regarding affordable housing, the policy framework suggests that all communities in the region should provide their fair share of affordable housing resources.

Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Oakland neighborhoods need economic, social, cultural, and entertainment centers. The stability and character of these commercial centers are vital to the health of the neighborhoods—and of the City as a whole. Under proposed policies, neighborhood commercial development would be clustered together rather than spread out along corridors. These centers would be designed to meet the daily needs of Oakland residents. A market study to calculate the demand for retail and professional services and to identify underserved areas is needed. Such a study would also analyze the impacts of large-scale retail development on neighborhood businesses. Furthermore, the study would develop zoning programs and incentives to attract businesses to underserved areas and to strengthen existing commercial centers.

Design of new development must lend itself to the distinctiveness of each neighborhood. The policy framework proposes that commercial development be designed in a way that reflects the desired character of the neighborhood and that does not conflict with the surrounding residences. Guidelines would be established to address

issues such as scale, building setbacks, pedestrian orientation, automobile access, and buffering of residential uses. The City would consider street improvements, as well as encourage the placement of housing above businesses. Commercial activities would be scrutinized to prevent public nuisances and crime. Hotels and motels, businesses that sell alcohol, and certain entertainment activities would undergo strict permitting and code enforcement policies to minimize community impacts.

Neighborhoods as Building Blocks

By drawing out and celebrating the distinct character of each neighborhood, Oakland will strengthen the diversity of its residential areas. Strong neighborhood identities are essential for building a sense of community among residents. To ensure cohesion, however, the City should also create and preserve links between neighborhoods. The policy framework proposes that neighborhood boundaries be considered when defining areas such as police beats, community development districts, and school attendance zones. The City will also support neighborhood groups in their efforts to improve their communities.

Unique and attractive structures will help distinguish Oakland's neighborhoods. Indeed, when asked which elements contribute to their neighborhood's character, community workshop participants often mentioned buildings, such as the Grand Lake Theater, the Melrose Library on Foothill Boulevard, and the historic homes in West Oakland. The policy framework proposes that urban design policies be developed to maintain and enhance the unique attributes of each neighborhood. Diversity in the built environment will be valued as much as diversity in the population.



Envision yourself being able to ride public transit to almost anywhere in the region. Careful

Transit ridership to work by Oakland residents is greater than for

coordination of the Bay Area's many transportation systems—rapid transit, passenger rail,

Alameda County or Bay Area residents as a whole. Oakland ridership,

ferry, bus, and freeway—has made life easier for commuters and travelers. Getting around

however, declined from 22 percent to 18 percent during the 1980s ...

Oakland is also a simpler task; residents can now hop on a bus, light rail, or shuttle to reach

Overall use of BART increased 22 percent over the last decade ...

their desired destinations. Neighborhood streets have been redesigned with pedestrians and

In general, the current trend in transportation is away from major

bicyclists in mind, making Oakland a safer place to live. Meanwhile, higher-density housing

investment in new facilities and towards increasing the efficiency of

and commercial uses have been concentrated around public transportation,

existing facilities through improved management ...

representing the neighborhoods of the future ...



“We need to think regionalism and take advantage of our position as a transportation hub.” — Margurite Fuller, Transportation Working Group Chair, General Plan Congress

Oakland is the transit hub for the East Bay. A number of local, regional, national, and international routes converge in Oakland, offering a wide range of transit options. These features reaffirm the City’s role as a regional center and boost its efforts to attract new businesses. By addressing future development in relation to the transportation network, Oakland will be more able to meet the transit needs of the community and to lessen the negative effects of suburban sprawl.

All Roads Lead to Oakland

As a regional hub, Oakland must build upon and utilize its port facilities and transportation networks. The City must work continually with the Port of Oakland and transportation carriers to maintain and upgrade cargo- and freight-handling facilities and transportation systems to meet future market demands. The policy framework calls for supporting the Port of Oakland’s efforts to compete as a primary port of call in the West Coast shipping industry and to expand the carrying capacity of the airport.

Transit-Oriented Development

Post-war growth in the region has consisted largely of suburban sprawl, resulting in long commutes, air pollution, dependency on cars, and an overall diminished quality of life. Today, we are rethinking how communities are designed, with respect to where we live, where we work, and how we get around. One planning concept, transit-oriented development (TOD), takes advantage of fixed transportation systems and provides the means to integrate transit and land use planning. In Oakland, there is great potential for developing “transit villages” at multi-modal facilities and at certain BART stations, like Fruitvale, West Oakland, and MacArthur. The draft policies propose that transit villages consist of mixed-use developments in a pedestrian-oriented setting. These communities would house a variety of commercial uses, encourage both day and night activities, provide additional public space, and mesh with the surrounding neighborhoods. Another key concept is the creation of mixed-use development at locations throughout the City where two or more modes of public transit converge.

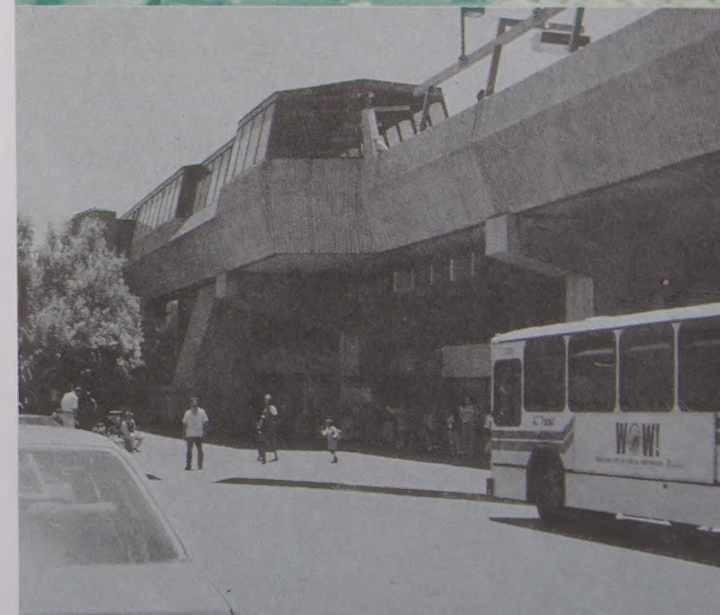
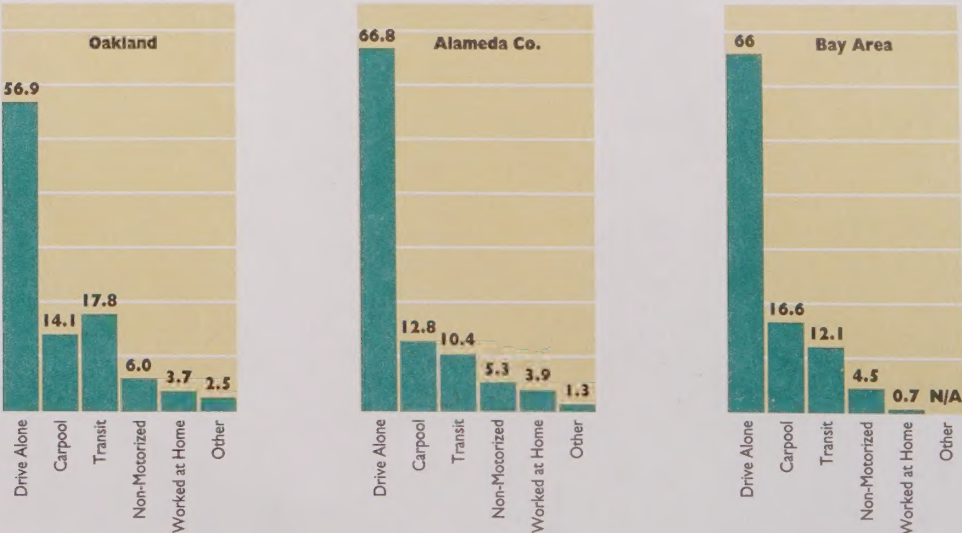
Safer Streets

As a city of neighborhoods, Oakland must provide safe access to commercial uses, recreational facilities, and local services. Many residents express concern about the speeding traffic in their neighborhoods. In response, the City has spent the last two years researching and instituting a number of speed-reduction methods. The policy framework suggests that the City continue to its efforts to slow traffic. Oakland will also make all of its streets pedestrian and bicycle friendly, while balancing the need to transport goods through town.

Reducing Congestion

Oakland has its share of traffic congestion. A key challenge is to encourage commuters to carpool or to use alternative modes of transportation, including bicycles. The policy framework proposes that congestion be lessened by promoting alternative modes of transportation and by implementing street improvements. The City will work closely with local and regional transit providers to improve intermodal transportation connections and facilities.

How People Get to Work

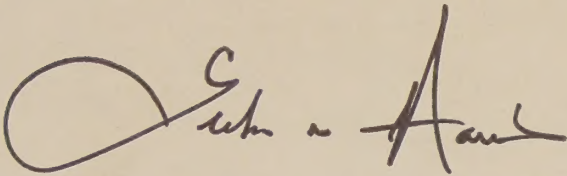


As we enter the 21st century, we must be prepared for the challenges and opportunities we will face as a City.

Envision Oakland is a summary of the goals and policies for Oakland's General Plan. It reflects the work of over a thousand of participants and extensive public dialogue at many meetings and workshops held throughout the City over the past two years.

After reviewing this summary, let us know if you agree with the concepts presented or if you have any suggestions. It is important that the General Plan provide a reliable guide for residents, business owners, and the development community to use when making personal or investment decisions within the City of Oakland. Your participation can make a long-term difference in your community.

The next phase of the General Plan update will focus on implementation strategies, or how to make the vision become a reality. I encourage you to join us in the months ahead as we explore methods to bring about a positive future for the City.



Elihu M. Harris
Mayor, City of Oakland

General Plan Congress

- Dayle Bartlett, District 3
- Arthur Clark, Elmhurst/MacArthur Planning Group
- Del Davis, Chamber of Commerce
- Barry H. Epstein, District 2
- Jeffrey E. Franzen, District 6
- Margurite A. Fuller, District 5
- Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra, Mayoral Appointee

- Minnie Gibson, District 6
- Judith Goldsmith, Sierra Club
- Sylvester Grisby, District 7
- Xandra Grube, District 2
- Les Hausrath, Landmarks Board
- Glen Wm. Jarvis, Mayoral Appointee
- Richter W. Kong, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
- Dana Lang, Mayoral Appointee
- Mi Yeong Lee, Mayoral Appointee
- Paul Merrick, District 7

- Walter Miles, District 1
- Theresa Navarro, District 5
- Robert Odermatt, American Institute of Architects
- Jennie Ong, At Large
- Celso Ortiz, Port Commission
- Richard J. Philips, District 4
- Zarka Popovic, Mayoral Appointee
- Judy Rowe, Planning Commission
- Barbara Sanders, East Bay Housing Organization

- James Servais, Oakland Development Council, Oakland PLUS Alliance
- Peter Smith, Planning Commission
- Christ Surunis, District 4
- Phillip Tagami, Environmental Affairs Commission
- Thomas C. Thatcher, Oakland Association of Realtors
- Queen E. Thurston, District 3
- Sara Wilson, College Avenue Merchants/Professional Association

Oakland's City Council

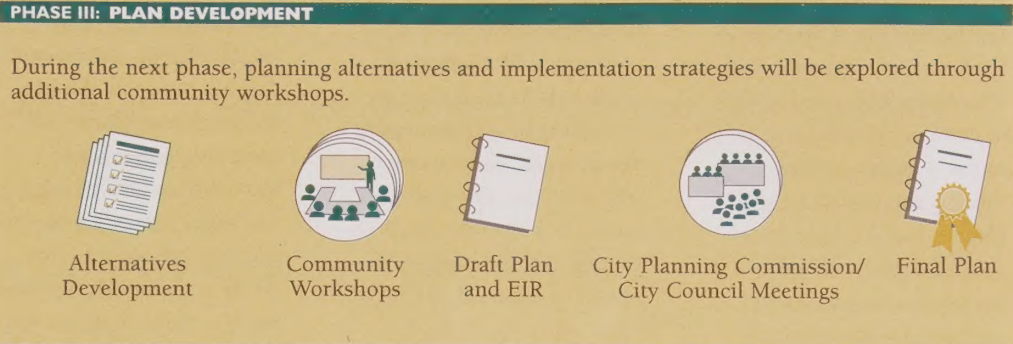
- Henry L. Chang, Jr., At Large
- Sheila Jordan, District 1
- John Russo, District 2
- Natalie Bayton, District 3
- Dick Spees, District 4
- Ignacio De La Fuente, District 5
- Nate Miley, District 6
- Dezie Woods-Jones, District 7
- Craig G. Kocian, City Manager

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Where we have been...

PHASE I: VISION, GOALS, AND ISSUES	PHASE II: POLICY FRAMEWORK
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Data was collected on existing conditionsA community survey was completedIssues were identifiedVisions and goals were developed <p>The end of this phase was marked by the Spring '95 Planning Fair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community workshops were heldObjectives and Policies were draftedPreliminary Concept Maps were prepared <p>The Spring '96 Planning Fair, followed by a review of the policy framework by the City Planning Commission and City Council, will bring an end to Phase II and the Policy Development process.</p>

Where we are going...



Oakland Needs Your Involvement Now

To find out more about the General Plan update, and to share your comments, contact the General Plan Team:

Iris Starr, Community Involvement Coordinator
1330 Broadway, Suite 310
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 238-3941
fax (510) 238-6538

For more detailed information, request a copy of the Draft Goals, Objectives, and Policies document.

How Can I Get Involved?

- Ask to be included on the General Plan mailing list.
- Attend upcoming workshops, General Plan Congress meetings, and public hearings on the General Plan.

Comprehensive Planning Division,
City of Oakland, March 1996
Editing, Design and Production
by Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.

PLACE
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What is your vision for Oakland's future? Please join us in shaping the City!
Contact the Office of Planning and Building at (510) 238-3941 for more information.